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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4036
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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2200
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1170
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0565
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1867
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5840
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4123
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2008
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT -- DECEMBER 5

Lead Stories

1. Front-page news highlighted Ricardo Lagos' announcement that he would not run as a presidential candidate for the Concertacion bloc. Dailies also noted the ceremony in Punta Arenas between Presidents Bachelet and Fernandez to commemorate Pope John Paul II's successful mediation to prevent a war between the two countries in 1978.

U.S.-Related News

2. Photo of Admiral Gary Roughead and Ambassador Simons at the Navy fair Exponaval 2008, which is taking place this week in Valparaiso (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 12/5).

Local

3. Ricardo Lagos called a press conference to announce that he would not run as a presidential candidate for the Concertacion bloc. "I am not and will not be a presidential candidate," said Lagos. He hinted that his decision is because of the coalition's inability to unite behind any one candidate. Lagos said he would campaign for the Concertacion's candidate, whomever that person is (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon, circ. 33,000, 12/4).

4. Lagos' decision has the PPD-PS bloc in disarray, because both parties will have to decide whether to endorse Eduardo Frei (DC) or Jose Miguel Insulza (PS) as their presidential candidate. Senator Guido (PPD) proposed presenting a third alternative candidate. Eugenio Tironi, also PPD, said the bloc should try to reach a consensus by consensus without a primary. Insulza, meanwhile, said one of his terms to become a presidential candidate is for the bloc to work united. With Lagos' announcement, the UDI's perception is that the opposition's chances to win the 2009 presidential election have not changed (El Mercurio, conservative, 12/5).

5. Enrique Correa (PS) said he is certain that Lagos' decision is final and that the Concertacion's primary will be held between Eduardo Frei and Insulza (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 12/5).

6. "I am available as a candidate if it is an element of unity and with sufficient support in the Concertacion," said Jose Miguel Insulza after Lagos' announcement. PS President Camilo Escalona urged Insulza to announce whether he intends to run as soon as possible (El Mercurio, 12/5).

¶17. Fundacion PROhumana conducted a survey on people's perception on how businesses, government, and civil society are doing in the area of social responsibility. The Kellogg and Ford Foundations financed the project. The survey showed that 54% do not know what the concept of social responsibility entails. Therefore, the participants were read a definition and then asked to respond the survey.

¶18. Both the business and the government sectors were poorly rated, but citizens rated themselves as doing "significantly better" in this area. The poor rating for the business sector is mainly because of the perception that companies in general are not concerned with the environment, while they are mostly responsible for pollution. With regard to the government, public entities are generally perceived as honestly concerned with people's needs, but lacking the skills to do things right or to fulfill their commitments in this area. The best graded public entities were municipalities, with 29% support. In the area of social organizations, Greenpeace was by far the best rated entity (69%) (Que Pasa, weekly news magazine, 12/5).

¶19. Bachelet presented today the National Climate Change Action Plan, which includes an array of proposals for the 2008-2010 period. The project has a thorough analysis on the impact of climate change on energy, agricultural and fishing resources, biodiversity, and the coastal area. It also proposes strategies for better control of the Yellow Fever, Dengue, Malaria, the creation of a registry of glaciers, and the construction of desalinization plants up north to supply water (El Mercurio, 12/5).

Chile and Other Countries: Argentina, Cuba, Peru

¶10. Presidents Bachelet and Fernandez meet in Punta Arenas and will travel to Monte Aymond in Argentina for a ceremony to commemorate the resolution of a border conflict that had both countries on the verge of a war in 1978. The conflict was solved thanks to the intervention of Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Odilio Sherer will speak on behalf of the Catholic Church and the two Presidents will set the first stone of a monument (El Mercurio, 12/5).

¶11. President Bachelet appointed Gabriel Gaspar (PS) Ambassador to Cuba. Gaspar will replace Jaime Toha who was appointed Intendente of the VIII Region. Gaspar went into exile a year after the military coup and lived in Mexico. He was one of the founders of the MAPU and has close ties with political sectors on the island (La Tercera, 12/5).

¶12. Peruvian General Edwin Donayre, responsible for making inflammatory remarks about Chile, officially retired today. The General, however, was not sanctioned for his remarks (El Mercurio, 12/5).

URBAN